

III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the site's historical context, with specific reference to the historical development of Sussex County. An overview of Sussex County history, contained in the following section, provides the cultural parameters within which occupation of Site 7S-F-68 occurred. Relevant sources were found at the Historical Society of Delaware; the Bureau of Archives and Records, Hall of Records; the University of Delaware; and the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP). The concluding section of this chapter presents a summary of the site-specific historical research. Historical research was initiated during the Phase II archaeological study of the Route 113 corridor (LeeDecker et al. 1992), and was expanded during the most recent program of investigations focusing on the cemetery. The goals of the site-specific historical research were to establish ownership and occupation of the property, in order to provide information about the identity of the deceased individuals. This background study began with a title search of the property, which allowed cross-referencing with the appropriate census schedules and other materials. Sources were consulted at the Sussex County Courthouse and the Bureau of Archives and Records.

B. SUMMARY OF SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORY

The earliest European occupation in Sussex County occurred in 1659 when the Dutch established a block house, called Company's Fort, at Hoerenkil, later Lewes (Hancock 1976:14). The outpost expanded to include a small agricultural settlement under the Mennonite leadership of Cornelius Plockhoy in the early 1660s. The Anglo-Dutch war interrupted the growth of the fledgling colony when Sir Robert Carr occupied New Amstel and Hoerenkil and confiscated all of the possessions of Plockhoy's community. Plockhoy later moved on to Germantown but some of his followers remained in Sussex County, where they swore allegiance to the English crown (Hancock 1976:14-15).

The three southern counties that became Delaware were contested by English proprietors as well as by rival English and Dutch imperial claims. No sooner had the English supplanted the Dutch than Lord Baltimore, proprietor of Maryland, challenged the claim of the Duke of York. In 1672, Captain Thomas Jones led raids on Hoerenkil on behalf of the Maryland proprietor, forcing settlers to swear allegiance to Lord Baltimore or suffer imprisonment and confiscation of their property. In the meantime, in July 1673, the Dutch fleet sailed into New York harbor and repossessed the city and the settlements on the Delaware. Maryland took advantage of the confusion to tighten its hold on Hoerenkil. Thomas Howell, acting under commission to Lord Baltimore, led another raid on the settlement on the grounds that the inhabitants had taken the oath of allegiance to the Dutch. A second raid led by Howell resulted in destruction of the entire settlement except for a single barn (Hancock 1976:15-16).

Peace between England and Holland was restored in 1676 and Holland ceded its possessions in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware to England. Lord Baltimore continued to issue competing patents to land in what become Sussex County, known in Maryland as Somerset County; Governor Lovelace of New York, acting on behalf of the Duke of York, also issued patents to land in the county. Finally, in 1682, the three lower counties were confirmed to William Penn of Pennsylvania, which seems to have brought the contests among the contending proprietors to an

end (Hancock 1976:17-18). Penn changed the name from Somerset to Sussex, organized a government, and instituted the system of hundreds.

By 1700, the county is believed to have contained about 1,000 persons. With Lewes as the only town, and the commercial and administrative center of the county, settlement dispersed along the Indian River, Mispillion River, and Cedar Creek. Most families engaged in agriculture, with tobacco, corn, wheat, and rye as the principal crops. There were few roads and occupants relied primarily on water transport (Hancock 1976:20-21). Benjamin Eastburn's map of 1737 suggests that settlement was still fairly sparse in Sussex County in the early eighteenth century although roads connected the major settlements and the Indian River appears to have been navigable by small vessels to about ten miles inland (Munroe and Dann 1975:225).

The town of Lewes prospered as a maritime, commercial, and administrative center, but the gradual growth of western settlements led to familiar agitation by the so-called back country for a county seat that was more centrally located. In addition to agriculture, bog iron deposits and processing sites provided the basis for some economic development west of the original coastal settlements along the headwaters of the Nanticoke after 1763. By 1763, Jonathan Vaughn and other entrepreneurs from Chester County, Pennsylvania, had established the Deep Creek Iron Works, a complex of forges and foundries, located about seven miles northwest of the present site of Georgetown. The iron works was supported by a 5,000-acre plantation, a system of roads, and a stone wharf on Deep Creek which afforded access to ocean-going vessels (Tunnell 1955:87-88). Other furnaces and forges in the area included Unity Forge, located three miles above Concord (the site of the Deep Creek Iron Works), and Collins Forge (also called Gravelly Delight), located on Gravelly Branch. Operated successively by Captain John Collins, his son Governor John Collins, and his grandson Theophilus Collins, Gravelly Delight was the last of the Sussex County iron works to manufacture iron using the traditional blast technology, shutting down some time in the 1850s (Hancock 1976:62; Tunnell 1955:88).

Although iron resources contributed to the economic development of the area, the nature of the early iron industry, particularly its requirements for vast quantities of timber from which to manufacture charcoal, did not stimulate rapid increase in population. The terrain in the vicinity of Georgetown was low and swampy and the land was held in large tracts by largely absentee landholders, further discouraging rapid settlement by farmers (Wade 1975:5). The relatively desolate swamps in the area afforded refuge to Tories during the Black Camp Rebellion of 1780. Most of the activity during the War of Independence affected the ports along the Delaware. However, insurrectionists mainly from Cedar Creek and Slaughter Neck Hundred led an uprising in 1780, having established their headquarters in a swamp about six miles north of Georgetown. Kent County militia dispersed the uprising, which involved about 400 men. The eight leaders were condemned to death for treason but were pardoned in November 1780 (Hancock 1976:43-44).

Among the grievances that had become intertwined with economic complaints during the Revolutionary War years was the continued sense of political isolation that the back country had felt in the years leading up to the war. This issue was finally resolved in 1791 when Georgetown was surveyed in John Pettijohn's field "sixteen miles from anywhere" and designated the county seat (Wade 1975:5). In roughly the same period, but for different reasons, Parson Sydenham Thorne erected a mill on Mispillion Creek in 1787 and together with Joseph Oliver, the local landowner, encouraged people to take up lots in the newly surveyed town of Milford. Oliver had occupied land in this area since 1773 when he bought a portion of Saw Mill Range, a 1,730-acre tract granted to Henry Bowman in 1680. Prior to constructing the mill, Oliver had run a store and shipped local farmers' produce to market on his own vessels. In 1791, Thorne established an Episcopal Church in Milford, eventually shifting the religious center from an older church located three miles west of the fledgling town (Hancock 1976:57-58).

Except for Georgetown, whose genesis was essentially political, a series of small towns in the county followed a similar sequence of development: houses clustered around gristmills and sawmills, ports, and fords, and the creation of schools, churches, post offices, and other industries followed (Hancock 1976:56). What frequently began as small transportation hubs with waterpower appropriate for milling thus combined central place services for the outlying farmers with transportation and industrial capability. Fleatown, later renamed Federalsburg, was initially a small crossroads community defined by two taverns that served the stagecoaches. The advent of the railroad, however, precipitated a slow decline of the taverns and then the village (Conrad 1908:695). Other small towns in Sussex County dating to this period include Seaford (1799), Laurel (1802), Bethel (1800), Dagsborough (ca. 1780), Millsboro (1792), Frankford (1808), Selbyville (1842), and Milton (1807) (Hancock 1976:58-59).

Growth in the vicinity of Georgetown was slow in the 1790s, due in part to the absence of networks of transportation and communication (Wade 1975:6). In 1796, the General Assembly authorized construction of three county roads: the first ran from Milford Bridge through Georgetown and Dagsborough to the Maryland state line; the second from Lewes through Georgetown to the Maryland state line; and the third line from Georgetown "to the west line that divides the hundred of Little Creek, in the said county from Maryland" (as quoted in Wade 1975:7). The road from Milford to Georgetown became known as the "State Road" (Beers 1868). Site 7S-F-68 lies along the original Milford to Georgetown Road, now known as County Road 213 (Figure 3).

Corn had been the principal crop cultivated in Sussex County during the Colonial period and retained its primacy during the first half of the nineteenth century, followed by wheat and other crops. Farmers appear to have practiced a mix of relatively small-scale subsistence/commercial agriculture (Hancock 1976:59). Wheat prices were initially inflated by European demand during the Napoleonic Wars, but after 1819 this market vanished, leaving economic depression in its place. Migration to new lands further west accentuated the depression and agriculture stagnated until about 1830. Thereafter, urban demand for fruits, vegetables, and dairy products slowly stimulated the state's agricultural economy, assisted by improved agricultural techniques that enhanced farm productivity (Hancock 1974:I:374). This transition to farming suited to the domestic urban market was felt first in New Castle County but with the growth of the rail system began to spread to Sussex County by the eve of the Civil War (Hancock 1947:I:376). Farmers in Sussex County did experiment with planting mulberry trees and raising silk cocoons in the 1830s and 1840s, encouraged, no doubt, by a state bounty offered on the production of cocoons and silk in 1837 (Hancock 1976:30).

The middle decades of the nineteenth century were notable for the tremendous expansion in the cultivation of peaches. Peaches were introduced into the state by Isaac Reeves of New Jersey in 1832. New Castle County was initially the center of peach cultivation, although with the construction of the railroad, peach orchards had spread to lower Delaware by the 1850s (Hancock 1947:I:382; 1976:60-61). The Delaware Railroad reached the Maryland border at Delmar in 1859. The Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, which was extended from Harrington east to Milford and then south through Ellendale to Georgetown in 1869, encouraged not only cultivation of more perishable, market crops but also the establishment of processing plants and canneries in the town (Delaware Division of the Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Wilmington Railroad 1914; Wade 1975:35).

On the eve of the Civil War, the statewide transition away from grain had begun but was far from complete. Delaware was still heavily invested in wheat and corn, and the most valuable farms and those with the greatest concentration in orchard products, market gardens, and dairying were located primarily in New Castle County (Hancock 1947:I:383). Sussex County lagged behind New Castle in the shift to new crops, and unlike Kent and New Castle Counties, where slavery was a dying institution, continued to rely on slave labor, containing more than half of the state's

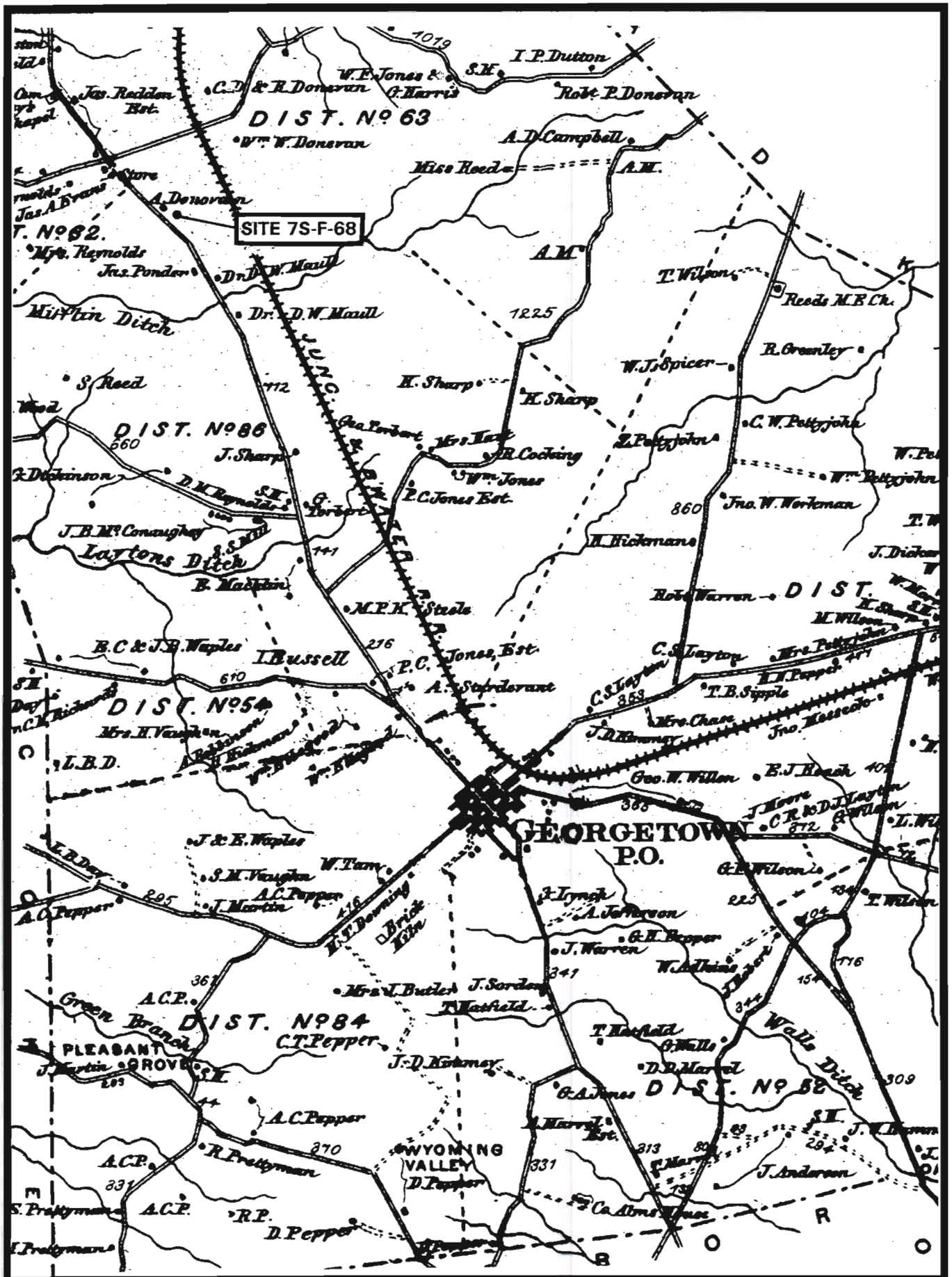


FIGURE 3: Site Area and Vicinity, Circa 1868

Source: Beers 1868

slave population (Hancock 1976:64). The largest slave owner in the county on the eve of the war was Benjamin Burton of Indian Creek Hundred, owner of 28 slaves. Burton was the exception, rather than the rule; most slaves augmented relatively modest farm households where they worked as domestic servants or field laborers (Hancock 1976:65).

Sectional tensions were high in the county during the war, and residents of Broad Creek Hundred openly celebrated Confederate victories. Most people were unenthusiastic about the proposed compensated emancipation of slaves in 1861, and the Democrats carried the county in the 1862 elections. In economic terms, however, the war was fundamentally kind to the county, leading to higher prices for agricultural commodities and an expansion in shipbuilding facilities in both Milford and Milton (Hancock 1976:82-84).

The economic promise implicit in the extension of the railroad prior to 1860 became apparent in the decades following the war. Population growth in Sussex County was slow but steady, tourism to shore resorts increased, and by 1900, the county was the state leader in production of peaches, blackberries, and strawberries. Corn was still the leading crop, as it had been since the Colonial period, and Sussex County farmers derived additional income from livestock, poultry, and dairying (Hancock 1976:88-89). The railroads were responsible for other forms of development as well. Both Lincoln and Ellendale, surveyed in 1867, constituted direct responses to access to the railroad (Robinson 1976:62), and in 1875, the Fruit Preserving Company, a cannery, was established in Georgetown near the railroad depot, marking an industrial response not only to improved transport facilities but also to the transition in local agriculture (Wade 1975:35). In 1876, the Georgetown Packing Company was organized (Wade 1975:41). Industry in Georgetown expanded in the 1880s under the leadership of Charles H. Treat. Treat acquired the Fruit Preserving Company in 1883 and began to manufacture various wooden novelties and dishes. In 1885, Treat opened a second plant, which manufactured baskets, barrels, casks, lumber, and did scroll- and jig-sawing. Treat's manufactories were soon followed by several new canneries, a steam sawmill, and expanded consumer services, from insurance to ice cream parlors (Wade 1975:41-42). Not all functions were concentrated in the towns and villages, however. Churches and schools were distributed across the landscape where they were easily accessible to the dispersed rural population.

Although Sussex County was the center of Delaware's peach growing in 1890, peach culture in the state was on the wane by 1900, partly as a result of disease, the cause of which was never identified (Hancock 1947:I:385-386). At the turn of the century and continuing up to World War II, corn and wheat were still important crops as were strawberries, tomatoes, lima beans, green peas, snap beans, cantaloupes, asparagus, watermelons, cucumbers, and sweet corn, particularly in the southern part of the state (Baker 1947:I:394). The state highway program, inaugurated in 1920, greatly stimulated dairying and egg sales in Sussex County in the period following World War I (Baker 1947:I:397,401).

The principal innovation in twentieth-century agriculture was the expansion in raising broilers, young birds weighing less than two and one-half pounds. The modern poultry industry is associated with the experiments of Mrs. Wilmer Steele of Ocean View, Sussex County, with raising and marketing chicks in 1923. By 1928, broiler production had spread across Sussex County and into Kent and New Castle. The Steeles pioneered the timing of raising fowl, beginning the broods in February, and experimented with the organization and sizes of the poultry houses. The 2,000-bird unit, the standard in 1930, had by 1940 become considered a "back yard" flock, capable of being handled as a part-time activity (Baker 1947:I:402). The expansion in the production and marketing of broilers simultaneously led to an expansion in hatcheries and hatching-egg production as well as the processing, distribution, and retailing of feed (Baker 1947:I:403, 404). The broilers had initially been delivered live to urban markets; demand among New York City's burgeoning Jewish population was particularly strong. In 1938, Jack Udel

established the first dressing plant in Frankford, Sussex County, which successfully slaughtered and dressed the birds and then shipped them to retail outlets (Baker 1947:I:405).

Since 1920, Sussex County has grown enormously, although it retains its agricultural basis. In 1970, 85 percent of the residents were classified as rural, and more than one-half of Delaware's farms and cropland were contained in the county (Hancock 1976:101). Corn has remained an important crop, but cultivation of soybeans together with corn production and poultry raising have supplanted the growing of labor-intensive fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, lima beans, peas, and strawberries. Many canneries and processing plants shut down or were replaced by grain elevators, broiler houses, and poultry processing plants (Hancock 1976:100). Vlastic Foods maintained a food processing plant in Millsboro, and Draper Foods employed about 1,000 people at another vegetable packing plant in Milton. In addition to food packing and processing, modern industries in the county include chemicals, instrument manufacturing, nylon, fertilizer, textiles, and electronics (Hancock 1976:103).

C. OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY OF SITE 7S-F-68

The Site 7S-F-68 property is located in central Sussex County, three miles north of Georgetown, in the Georgetown Hundred. The cemetery is contained in a tract which Elizabeth West inherited from her father, Jonathan Dickerson, in 1823. Previous research (LeeDecker et al. 1992) had not been able to ascertain how long Jonathan Dickerson had owned the property, no deed having been recorded for the previous transaction. Further research was recently carried out focusing on Jonathan Dickerson. The chain of title can now be reconstructed back to the original survey in 1737 (Table 1).

Jonathan Dickerson's will, written a few months before his death in November 1823, described the project area as a tract of between 80 and 90 acres on which a tenant, Alexander Kimmey, then lived. Dickerson's will also stated that he had purchased this tract from James Redden and Elihu McCracken (Sussex County Estate File A69:60-62, Delaware Archives).

Alexander Kimmey first appeared as a resident of Broadkiln Hundred in the 1820 census. His household consisted of ten individuals: Alexander, himself, who was over 45; his wife, also over 45; one male child between 10 and 16; five male children under 10; one female child between 10 and 16; and one female slave under 14. By 1830 it appears that Alexander Kimmey had left the neighborhood (U.S., Bureau of the Census, Broadkiln Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware, 1820:332-333 and 1830:35-36).

Jonathan Dickerson was born circa 1766 (Sussex County Chancery Case T#1). By the time he reached adulthood in 1788, two other men named Jonathan Dickerson were also residents of Broadkiln Hundred (Manuscript assessment, Broadkiln Hundred, 1788:31,44). The 7S-F-68 site area was part of Broadkiln Hundred until 1833, when it became part of Georgetown Hundred (Conrad 1908:729). The other two Jonathans were father and son. The Jonathan Dickerson who would later own Site 7S-F-68 was the son of Samuel Dickerson. Jonathan's 1823 will mentions two brothers, Samuel and Peter (Sussex County Will Book G:302).

By 1796 Jonathan Dickerson apparently had established a homestead in neighboring Nanticoke Hundred (Manuscript assessment, Nanticoke Hundred, 1796:n.p.). The will of Job Sharp, written in May 1798, states that his daughter, Elizabeth "Betsy" Sharp, was married to Jonathan Dickerson. Job Sharp died June 1, 1798. Soon after, Jonathan and Betsy moved to a timber tract which had belonged to her father. It was located in Broadkiln Hundred near the boundaries of Nanticoke and Cedar Creek Hundreds. They established a homestead on which Jonathan Dickerson lived with his family until his death (Deposition of John Carlisle, Esq. in Sussex County Chancery Case S#11; Sussex County Orphan's Court Volume U:44).

TABLE 1
LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS, SITE 7S-F-68, 1737-1911

DATE	TRANSACTION
1911	Walter B. and Cora Hilyard to Coleman du Pont Road Inc. December 29, 1911; recorded January 6, 1912 \$1 8.267 acres for U.S. 113 ROW SC Deed Book 180:99
1909	Mary E. Donovan to Walter B. Hilyard January 13, 1909; recorded January 13, 1909 \$1100 85 acre tract SC Deed Book 167:172
1871	Asbury and Rhoda Donovan to Mary E. Donovan June 23, 1871; recorded March 30, 1877 "Natural love and affection" for their daughter 85 acre tract SC Deed Book 89:82
1865	Reuben Donovan to Asbury Donovan April 24, 1865; recorded April 25, 1865 "Natural love and affection" for his son 85 acre tract SC Deed Book 72:543
1852	Brinckley and Hester Davis to Reuben Donovan August 11, 1852; recorded August 12, 1852 \$335 85 acre tract SC Deed Book 59:287
1848	Mires B. West to Brinckley Davis January 25, 1848; recorded January 25, 1848 \$75 85 acre tract SC Deed Book 54:508
1840	Administration of Elizabeth West Administration Bond, March 28, 1840; Final Account, February 13, 1850 85 acre tract valued at \$275 allotted to her eldest son, Miers B. West Delaware Archive Probate Records Volume A106:116-117; SC Orphan's Court Docket U:427

TABLE 1--Continued

DATE	TRANSACTION
1823	Will of Jonathan Dickerson, of Broadkilm hundred August 29, 1823; recorded November 18, 1823 Bequeathes daughter, Elizabeth, tract of 80 or 90 acres he bought from Elisha McCracken and James Redden SC Will Book G:302
c.1808	James Redden to Jonathan Dickerson Unrecorded deed Portion of 85 acre tract on east side of state road from Milford to Georgetown
1810	Sussex County Orphan's Court to James Redden July 14, 1810 160 acre intestate tract of Stephen Redden SC Orphan's Court Docket K:314
1799	Clement and Polly Jackson, Sussex County, to Stephen Redden, Sussex County December 16, 1799; recorded November 27, 1800 £153.15.0 153.75 acre tract on east side of state road from Georgetown to Milford SC Deed Book X22:6
1784	Sussex County Orphan's Court to Clement and Mary "Polly" Jackson November 13, 1784 135 acre tract near Horse Savannah SC Orphan's Court Docket E:110
1752	William Pettyjohn, [Jr.], Sussex County, to Andrew Collins, Sussex County December 11, 1752; recorded December 12, 1752 £18 106 acre tract on northwest side of the Drain in Carr's Neck in the forrest of Broadkilm hundred SC Deed Book H8:343
1749	Will of William Pettyjohn, Sussex County January 15, 1749; recorded All real estate left to son, William, including the 200 acre home plantation, "Whattson Choice" Delaware Archives Volume A93:19, SC Will Book A:403
1737	Penn Proprietors to William Pettyjohn, Sussex County Issued June 7, 1737; surveyed June 27, 1737 Warrant for 400 acres in forrest of Sussex County SC Warrant Book C:441

Jonathan Dickerson acquired some fifty acres lying on the east side of the state road from James Redden, including the Site 7S-F-68 property. There is no record of this transaction. In a deposition James Redden made in 1817, he stated that he had known Jonathan Dickerson for at least twenty-five years. Their acquaintance would have begun when James was fourteen and Jonathan was twenty-six (Deposition of James Redden in Sussex County Chancery Case S#11). Based upon the following information, the most likely date of acquisition is 1808. James Redden was the son of Stephen Redden. Stephen Redden's homestead was located at the Redden Crossroads. The Site 7S-F-68 cemetery was included in a 153.75 acre tract of land Stephen Redden bought from Clement and Polly Jackson in 1799. Both Redden and Jackson designated themselves as "gentlemen" in this transaction (Sussex County Deed Book X22:6). Stephen died the following year without having updated his will to include the Jackson Tract. In 1808 James Redden petitioned the Orphan's Court to divide the intestate tract among Stephen's heirs. After promising to buy out the other heirs, James was assigned the 160-acre Jackson Tract (Sussex County Orphan's Court Volume K:142,314).

Jonathan Dickerson's acquisition of the property containing the Site 7S-F-68 cemetery can be verified by an 1808 conveyance of an adjoining tract. The description of its metes and bounds indicated that Jonathan Dickerson was already in possession of the project area property (Sussex County Deed Book 28:226).

Stephen Redden purchased the 153.75-acre tract from Clement and Polly Jackson in 1799. The conveyance included all the land Jackson owned on the east side of the Georgetown to Milford Road and adjoined land Stephen already owned. When the Georgetown to Milford Road (now known as County Road 213) was formally laid out in August of 1792, it was described as "leading from George Town the nearest and best way to the cross roads at Stephen Reddens and Clement Jackson's new dwellings" (Sussex County Court of General Sessions Road Book 1:122-124). This description implies that Clement Jackson occupied a homestead near the cemetery site. Jackson had appeared on the Broadkiln Hundred tax lists since 1782, the earliest available for the hundred. Circa 1800, Jackson was assessed for 660 acres of land. The latter assessment probably dates to the period before the transfer of land to Stephen Redden in 1799, as Jackson had moved to North West Fork Hundred by the time of the 1800 census. In 1800 the household of Clement and Polly Jackson, both of whom were between 26 and 45 years of age, consisted of three male children between 10 and 16, one male child under 10, one female between 16 and 26, one female child between 10 and 16, and three female children under 10. They also had one slave. Clement Jackson died intestate in 1807 (Hancock 1983:166; Jackson, Clement estate, Sussex County Estate File A80:9, Delaware Archives; Maddux and Maddux 1964:351; Sussex County Manuscript Tax Assessment c.[1800]).

The 153.75 acres that Clement sold to Stephen Redden was part of a much larger tract of land Polly Jackson had inherited from her father, Andrew Collins. Collins died in 1784 leaving a wife, two daughters, and no will. His widow petitioned the Sussex County Orphan's Court to divide Andrew's real estate among his heirs, a daughter Mary, called "Polly," who had married Clement Jackson, and another daughter, Elizabeth, who would marry Peter Jackson. Clement and Polly Jackson were allotted a total of 800 acres from Andrew Collins's 1,520-acre estate. The tract which included the burials was part of a 103-acre tract called "Good Luck" (Figure 4). It had been sold to Collins's father, Andrew Collins Sr. by William Pettyjohn (Sussex County Orphan's Court Volume D:333, E:110,116).

During his lifetime, Andrew Collins, Sr. had lived in Sussex County, Delaware, and Worcester County, Maryland, just across the state line. Upon his death in 1773, his will stated that his son Andrew should inherit the tract bought from William Pettyjohn, a tract which the younger Andrew already occupied. Adjoining land and two slaves were also included. Andrew and his brother, John, also inherited a sawmill and gristmill from their father. Andrew Collins Jr. was present in

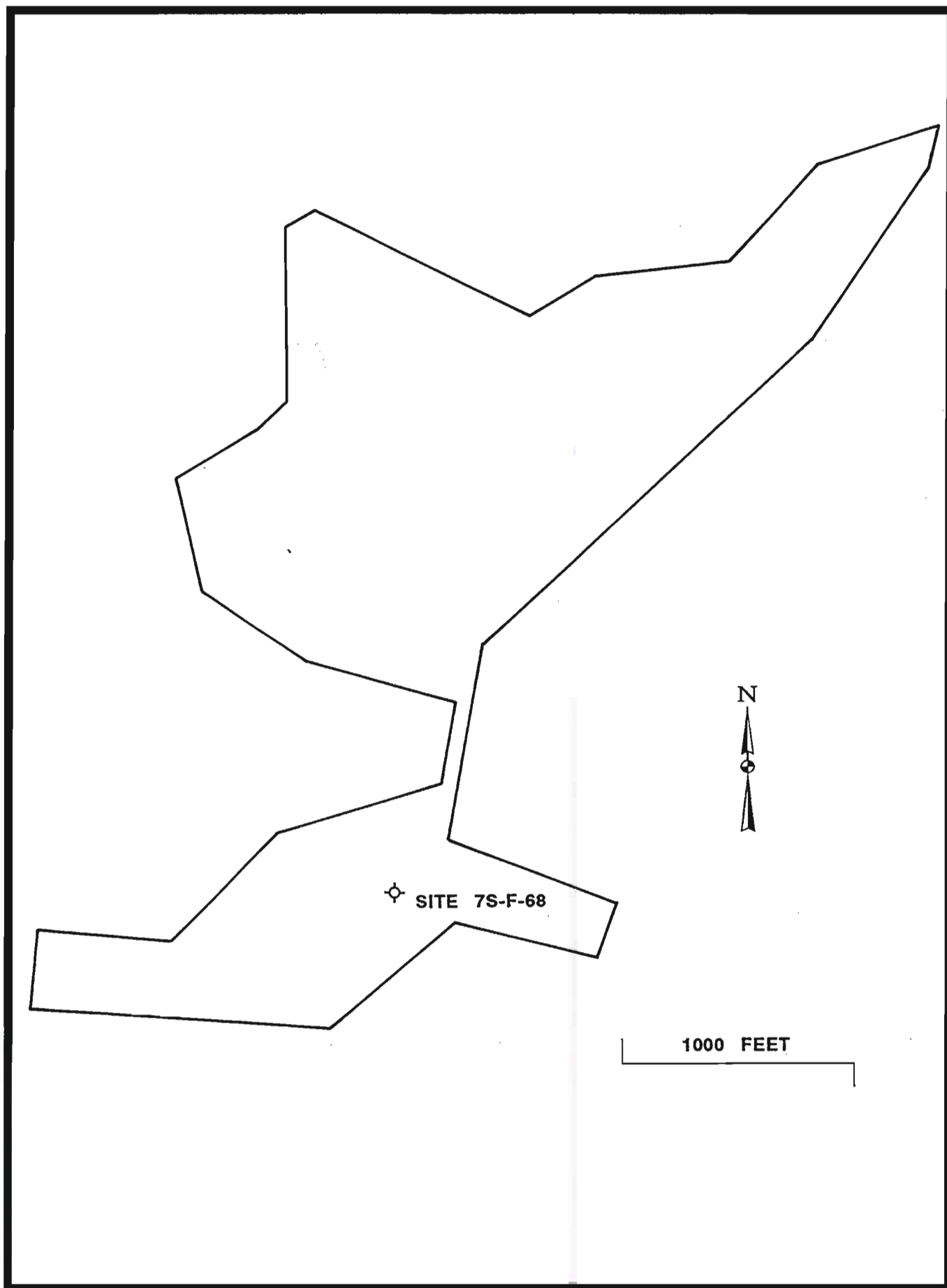


FIGURE 4: Site Location on the Collins/Jackson "Good Luck" Tract

*Source: Sussex County Orphan's Court
Record E114, 1784*

the project area by 1762. His father's mills were located about four miles southwest of the project area at Collins Pond (Stow n.d.:55; Sussex County Deed Book I9:401).

William Pettyjohn sold the "Good Luck" tract to Andrew Collins Sr. in 1752. Pettyjohn had inherited the tract from his father, also named William, in 1749. It was part of a 424-acre tract that had been surveyed for William Pettyjohn Sr. in 1737 (Sussex County Deed Book H8:343; Sussex County Estate File A93:19, Delaware Archives).

Historical research suggests that the burials are associated with the Collins/Jackson family. Andrew Collins Jr. may have been present in the project area as early as 1752, when his father bought the "Good Luck" tract. When Andrew Collins Jr. bought an adjoining tract in 1762, "Good Luck" was described as his "dwelling plantation." Andrew Collins Jr. died in 1784, leaving an estate with more than 1,500 acres of land and a sawmill and gristmill on Collins Pond. His daughter Polly and her husband, Clement Jackson, inherited the project area property. A 1792 road survey indicates that Jackson had his dwelling near the state road. Clement and Polly Jackson sold the project area to Stephen Redden in 1799 and moved to another part of Sussex County. Redden had already established a homestead at the Crossroads. After Stephen Redden's death, his son sold the project area to Jonathan Dickerson. Jonathan Dickerson's homestead was located in another part of Broadkiln Hundred. Thus, the family cemetery represented by Site 7S-F-68 was probably associated with the homesteads of Andrew Collins Jr. and Clement Jackson, circa 1752-1799, and any subsequent interments may have been persons who occupied the property as tenants. The only tenant that has been identified is Alexander Kimmey, who occupied the project area tract in the 1820s.